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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 6 August 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to draw your attention to the latest spate of attacks perpetrated in the ongoing campaign of Palestinian terrorism directed against the citizens of Israel.

On Sunday, 4 August, at 8.45 a.m. (local time), 9 people were killed, including 2 Philippine nationals, and some 40 wounded, when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives on a commuter bus near Safed in northern Israel. The blast blew off the roof of the bus, which then burst into flames, and hurled body parts through the air in what witnesses described as a horrific scene. Among the injured, many are suffering from severe burns as a result of the explosions. The terrorist organization Hamas claimed responsibility for this gruesome attack.

Later that same day, 2 people were killed and 17 wounded when a Palestinian gunman opened fire near the Damascus Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, part of Chairman Arafat's own Fatah organization, claimed responsibility for the attack. Also on Sunday, Palestinian gunmen associated with Fatah claimed responsibility for the fatal roadside shooting of Avi Wolanksi and his pregnant wife, Avital, as they drove near the community of Eli. One of their children, aged 3, was injured in the attack. In two other incidents, six Israeli soldiers and a civilian were injured, several seriously, by roadside bomb attacks.

Just yesterday, a serious suicide attack was averted when a Palestinian suicide bomber detonated his explosives prematurely near the town of Umm Al Fahm in northern Israel. A driver who had stopped to give the bomber a ride was seriously wounded in the explosion. Today, further terrorist attacks were thwarted when Israeli security forces discovered two explosive devices at the southern entrance to Jerusalem and arrested a 17-year-old Palestinian who was en route to perpetrate a suicide attack in the capital.

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Israel holds the Palestinian Authority and its Chairman responsible for this latest series of grave incidents. Such attacks are possible only through the financial and logistical support that the Palestinian leadership has supplied to terrorist groups and are the product of years of incitement to violence and terrorism in the official media, the demonization of Jews and Israelis in the Palestinian educational system, and the glorification of suicide bombers that pervades Palestinian society.

This wave of criminal attacks confirms the continuing need for Israeli defensive measures in the face of unrelenting threats of Palestinian terrorism. So long as the Palestinian Authority refuses to fulfil its responsibility to fight terrorism in accordance with its signed obligations, international law and the resolutions of the Security Council, Israel will have to take the measures necessary to ensure the safety and security of its citizens. Although it is impossible to thwart every attempted action, countless terror attacks have been prevented in recent weeks by the ongoing efforts of Israeli forces.

Israel calls upon the Palestinian Authority to take the steps necessary to bring about a cessation of all acts of terrorism and the resumption of a political process. We also call on the international community to be vigilant and consistent in its condemnation of terrorist attacks and to make it abundantly clear to the current Palestinian leadership that such attacks are intolerable and criminal and that progress towards peace will be impossible if genuine efforts are not made, once and for all, to end the wanton murder of innocent Israelis.

I submit this letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 42, as well as under item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Aaron **Jacob**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.